



Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to study the attitude of secondary school teachers & head teachers towards inclusive education. It aims to determine the effect of type of teacher, gender, age level & training in inclusive education on the attitude of teachers & head teachers towards inclusive education in government senior secondary schools of Himachal Pradesh. Teacher Attitude towards Inclusive Education Scale (TATIES) developed & standardized by the researcher herself was administered on a sample of 160 teachers & 40 head teachers selected through stratified sampling technique from 41 government schools of Shimla, Una & Kinnaur districts of Himachal Pradesh. Norms for level of attitude towards inclusive education were developed from teacher attitude towards inclusive education scale scores by converting them to z-scores. Statistical technique of "t-test" was used to analyse the attitude towards inclusive education scores of teachers & head teachers of senior secondary schools. The results indicated that teachers & head teachers don't differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education. Moreover teachers & head teachers don't differ significantly in relation to gender & training in inclusive education. Age level of teachers & head teachers found to affect significantly their attitude towards inclusive education. Teachers & head teachers with lower age level were found to have a higher level of attitude towards inclusive education as compared to teachers & head teachers with higher age levels. Further teacher & head teachers of senior secondary schools were found to possess a moderate level of attitude towards inclusive education.

KEY WORDS: Attitude towards inclusive education, CWSN, teachers, head teachers, training in inclusive education.

Introduction

Education is an essential building block of any civilization. No society can progress in its absence. It is the best investment that a country can make to build affluent, robust and equitable societies. Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to education."

Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities lay down that all the countries must take steps to ensure that persons with disabilities must have access to an inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education on an equality basis with other people in the communities. To ensure equal education opportunities for persons with disabilities UNESCO also recommends the development and implementation of inclusive education policies, programmes and practices through a rights-based approach.

The concept of inclusive education instigated in the Salamanca statement with a framework for action on special needs education in 1994. It necessitates all governments to adopt some law or policy stipulating principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools. This indicates that the school should meet the educational needs of all children irrespective of their disabilities. Inclusive Education ensures that all children irrespective of

their disability being able to learn together with normal children in ordinary school or community educational settings with appropriate network of support services. It is a process of strengthening of the education system to reach out to all learners and as a key strategy to achieve Education For All (UNESCO). Inclusion refers to the full-time placement of children with mild, moderate and severe disabilities in a regular classroom. Inclusive education differs from earlier terms 'integration' and 'mainstreaming', that tended to be associated primarily with education of children with disability. In fact Inclusion is a culture in itself which is created by people with commitment, enthusiasm, and determination to overcome the stumbling blocks that will persistently ascend. It is reflected in environments, behaviours, language and the continual challenging of oppressive values and attitudes, such as disablism.

Expanding access to inclusive education is part of a worldwide agenda today. Several studies related to inclusive education has been taken by various researchers at different levels. Hsien et al. (2009) found lack of training in inclusive education may lead to lower level of positive attitudes towards the inclusion among teachers. Inclusive education ensures that CWSN (Children With Special Needs) are placed in age-appropriate classes in their own neighbourhood schools to receive high quality teaching, interventions and provisions which enable them to meet success in the core curriculum regardless to any challenges they have (Bui et al., 2010; Alquraini & Gut, 2012). Khochen and Radfort (2010) revealed a positive attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of CWSN students in mainstream schools. Effective implementation of inclusive education entails consideration of policy matters, legislation on reforms, adequate financial, human, intellectual & infrastructural resources. The inclusion of CWSN poses challenges for teachers in the regular classroom. There is an urgent need to provide competencies at various levels for inclusion to be successful (Astha et al., 2012). Alhassan (2014) reported that teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities are different due to different schools' practices of inclusion. He found that a negative attitude of teachers was associated with large class-sizes and the presence of a student with disability in the classroom.

Tsakiridou and Polyzopoulou (2014) found that establishing collaborative support networks in school districts and the development of teacher education programs are required for developing positive teacher attitude towards inclusive education. Galovic et al. (2014) revealed that in general the teachers held neutral attitude towards inclusive Education and more positive expectations regarding that outcomes of inclusion. This study also indicates that the teachers with previous positive experience with working in an inclusive environment were reported more positive attitude toward inclusive education. Kaur and Kaur (2015) found no significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers with respect to their attitude towards inclusive education. This study also indicated a significant difference between rural and urban secondary school teachers with respect to their attitude towards inclusive education. On the other hand, Ashfaq et al. (2015) found that there is no significant difference in attitude of school heads in relation to gender towards inclusion of students with disabilities. Moreover school heads of rural area were found to possess more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Kumar (2016) has explored the Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education System & found a significant difference between rural and urban teachers towards inclusive Education. A significant difference between male & female teachers and low experience & high experience

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teachers towards inclusive education was also revealed. Bhatnagar and Das (2018) found a positive attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in New Delhi. The study reported that male, younger, less experienced and postgraduate teachers were more positive towards inclusion.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study endeavours to find the attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools of Himachal Pradesh towards Inclusive Education. It entails to study the attitude towards inclusive education in relation to type of teacher, gender, age level and training in inclusive education.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education or Inclusion is a new approach in education system in which students with disability are integrated with non-disabled children in a general classroom for most of the school day. The students with disability include visually impaired, hearing impaired, leprosy cured, locomotor disabled or physically handicapped, mentally retarded, mentally ill, speech impaired, learning disabled autistic and those diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Attitude is an internal state of an individual that predisposes the person to make an evaluation along a continuum, which in turn influences subsequent behaviours enacted by the individual.

For the present study Attitude towards Inclusive Education refers to the aggregate score obtained on Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (TATIES) developed & standardized by the researcher herself.

Type of Teachers

It refers to Teachers & Head Teachers/Principals serving in government senior secondary schools of Himachal Pradesh.

Gender

It refers to male & female teachers.

Age level

Two type of age levels of the teachers has been taken for the study, viz.

- Lower Age Level: Less than or equal to 40 Years
- Higher Age Level: More than 40 Years

Training in Inclusive Education

It refers to any type of workshop/refresher course or orientation programme attended by the teachers on inclusive education.

Significance of Study

Inclusive system provides a better quality education for all the children and is instrumental in changing discriminatory attitudes. If we want to ensure the right to education & equal opportunities for all, the inclusive education is pre-requisite. Inclusive education is regarded as the only way to future educational system that will lead us to improved education for a healthier society and world at large.

Forlin (2004) claims that teachers' knowledge and skills, together with their attitudes and beliefs are crucial in the development of inclusive practices. But even today the majority of teachers are not still comfortable in including children with disabilities in their classrooms.

Besides teachers' positive attitude towards inclusive education a favourable attitude of the school leader is equally important for inclusion to be effective. The negative attitudes of head teacher, administrators, inspectors etc. can be chief obstacles to inclusion (UNESCO, 2009, p.20). The literature review by Stubbs (2011) found that leadership was important as it improves student-teacher relationships, leads to better outcomes from teacher appraisals, and aids improved collaboration between teachers. No matter how committed or well-trained a teacher is, the negative attitudes of a school head teacher/principal can make it very challenging for a new teacher to implement their understandings and ideas. Therefore assessing the attitude towards inclusive education of head teachers along with the teachers is no doubt crucial. A thorough review of literature revealed that no studies have directly investigated the secondary school teachers' & head teachers' attitude towards inclusion in general education classroom particularly in the Himachal Pradesh. So the researcher intends to investigate the attitude of senior secondary teachers & head teachers towards the inclusion of CWSN in general education classroom, and the effect of variables such as Type of Teacher, Gender, Age level & Training in inclusive education on their attitude towards inclusive education.

Statement of the Problem

The present study is stated as "A study of Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education".

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools towards Inclusive Education.
2. To study the attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools towards inclusive education in relation to gender.
3. To study the attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools towards inclusive education in relation to their age level.
4. To study the difference in attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards inclusive education in relation to training in inclusive education.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools towards Inclusive Education.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools toward inclusive education in relation to gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools towards inclusive education in relation to their age level.
4. There is no significant difference in attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools towards inclusive education in relation to training in inclusive education.

METHODOLOGY

To study the attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers of senior secondary schools towards inclusive education descriptive research method was employed. Here an effort by the researcher has been made to study the attitude towards inclusive education (the dependent variable) due to independent variables viz. type of teacher, gender, age level and training in inclusive education.

Sample

Government senior secondary school teachers & head teachers of Himachal Pradesh form the population for the present study. The sample of the study has been taken from the 41 government senior secondary schools of 3 districts (Shimla, Kinnaur & Una) selected through stratified random sampling technique. Further 160 teachers selected randomly & available 40 head teachers from the selected 41 secondary schools constitute the sample for the study. Therefore the sample of the study comprised 160 teachers & 40 Head Teachers from 41 selected government senior secondary schools of Himachal Pradesh.

Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (TATIES)

For collecting the data on Attitude of the secondary school teachers & head teachers Teacher Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale (TATIES) developed by the researcher herself was used. The tool consists of 55 items in all having 39 favourable and 16 unfavourable items along a five point scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree carrying a weighted of 5,4,3,2,1 for favourable items and just the reverse in case of unfavourable items. The validity of TATIES was ascertained in terms of item validity, content validity and cross validity. Further the test retest & split half reliability of the scale was found to be 0.70 & 0.76 respectively. The researcher also developed the norms for interpreting teacher attitude towards inclusive education Scores. For the purpose TATIES was administered on 840 secondary school teachers & the TATIES score were converted to z-scores.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To fulfil the objectives of the present study, the researcher analysed and interpreted the obtained data on attitude of teachers & head teachers of secondary schools towards inclusive education using the statistical technique of ‘t’-test.

Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education

To study the Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education ‘t’-test was applied to attitude scores of teachers and head teachers of secondary schools towards Inclusive Education. The results have been tabulated below:

TABLE-1
‘t’-Values showing significance of difference in Attitude Scores of Teachers & Head Teachers of Senior Secondary Schools towards Inclusive Education

Category	N	Mean	SD	SED	‘t’-value (df=198)
Teachers	160	170.13	22.03	2.46	1.14 (NS)
Head Teachers	40	172.93	11.05		

A perusal of Table-1, reveals that the calculated ‘t’ value came out to be 1.14, which is lower than the table value of ‘t’(1.97) at df 198, even at .05 level of significance. Thus the hypothesis no. 1, “there is no significant difference in the attitude towards inclusive education of teachers & head teachers of senior secondary schools” was retained. Thus it may be interpreted that senior secondary school teachers & head teachers do not differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education. More over the mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education of teachers (170.13) and head teachers (172.93) indicated a moderate level

of attitude towards inclusive education among senior secondary school teachers & head teachers.

Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education in relation to Gender

To study the Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education in relation to gender 't'-test was applied to attitude scores towards Inclusive Education of male and female senior secondary school teachers & head teachers. The results have been tabulated below:

TABLE-2
't'-Values showing significance of difference in Attitude Scores towards Inclusive Education of Male & Female Senior Secondary School Teachers & Head Teachers

Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	't'-value (df=198)
Male	100	168.91	22.47	2.87	1.24 (NS)
Female	100	172.46	17.86		

A perusal of Table-2, reveals that the calculated 't' value came out to be 1.24, which is lower than the table value of 't'(1.97) at df 198, even .05 level of significance. Thus the hypothesis no. 2, "there is no significant difference in the attitude toward inclusive education of teachers & head teachers of senior secondary schools in relation to gender" was retained. Thus it may be interpreted that male and female senior secondary school teachers & head teachers do not differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education. More over the mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education of male (168.91) and female (172.46) teachers & head teachers showed a moderate level of attitude towards inclusive education among male and female senior school teachers & head teachers.

Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education in relation to Age Level

To study the Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education in relation to age level 't'-test was applied to attitude scores towards Inclusive Education of senior secondary school teachers & head teachers with Lower & Higher age levels. The results have been tabulated below:

TABLE-3
't'-Values showing significance of difference in Attitude Scores towards Inclusive Education of Senior Secondary School Teachers & Head Teachers in relation to Age Level

Age Level	N	Mean	SD	SED	't'-value (df=198)
Lower Age Level	72	174.55	20.91	3.00	2.01*
Higher Age Level	128	168.50	19.47		

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance

A perusal of Table-1, reveals that the calculated 't' value of came out to be 2.01, which is higher than the table value of 't'(1.97) at df 198, for .05 level of significance. Thus the hypothesis no.3, "there is no significant difference in the attitude toward inclusive education of teachers & head teachers of senior secondary schools in relation to their age level" was rejected. Thus it

may be interpreted that senior secondary school teachers & head teachers with lower & higher age levels differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education. More over the mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education of teachers & head teachers with lower age level were higher found to be higher than the teachers & head teachers with higher age level. Therefore it may be concluded that teachers & head teachers with lower age level possess significantly higher level of attitude towards inclusive education as compared to teachers & head teachers with higher age levels. Further the mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education of teachers & head teachers with lower age level (174.55) & higher age level (168.50) suggested that teachers & head teachers of senior secondary schools possess a moderate level of attitude towards inclusive education.

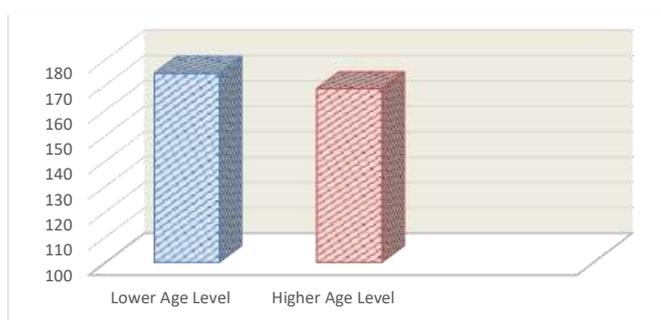


Figure-1 Showing Mean level of Attitude Scores towards Inclusive Education of teachers & head teachers of Senior Secondary Schools with lower & higher age levels

Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education in relation to Training in Inclusive Education

To study the Attitude of Teachers & Head Teachers towards Inclusive Education in relation to training in inclusive education, ‘t’-test was applied to attitude scores towards Inclusive Education of trained & untrained senior secondary school teachers & head teachers. The results have been tabulated below:

TABLE-4

‘t’-Values showing significance of difference in Attitude Scores towards Inclusive Education of Senior Secondary School Teachers & Head Teachers in relation to Training in Inclusive Education

Training in Inclusive Education	N	Mean	SD	SED	‘t’-value (df=198)
Trained	38	172.53	16.66	3.17	0.72 (NS)
Untrained	162	170.25	21.11		

A perusal of Table-4, reveals that the calculated ‘t’ value came out to be 0.72, which is lower than the table value of ‘t’ (1.97) at df 198, even at .05 level of significance. Thus the hypothesis no.4, “there is no significant difference in the attitude toward inclusive education of teachers & head teachers of senior secondary schools in relation to training in inclusive education” was retained. Thus it may be interpreted that trained & untrained senior secondary

school teachers & head teachers do not differ significantly in their attitude toward inclusive education. More over the mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education of trained (172.53) and untrained (170.25) teachers & head teachers indicated a moderate level of attitude towards inclusive education among trained and untrained senior secondary school teachers & head teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

After the analysis and interpretation of data, the following conclusions were laid down:

1. Teachers & head teachers of senior secondary schools do not differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education. Moreover teachers & head teachers of senior secondary schools possess a moderate attitude towards inclusive education.
2. Male and Female senior secondary school teachers & head teachers do not differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education. Moreover male and female senior secondary school teachers possess a moderate attitude towards inclusive education.
3. Senior secondary school teachers & head teachers with lower & higher age levels differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education. Senior secondary school teachers & Head teachers with lower age level possess a higher level of attitude towards inclusive education as compared to teachers & head teachers with higher age level. Moreover senior secondary school teachers & head teachers with lower and higher age levels possess a moderate level of attitude toward inclusive education.
4. Senior secondary school teachers & head teachers do not differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education in relation to training in inclusive education. Moreover senior secondary school trained and untrained teachers & head teachers possess a moderate attitude towards inclusive education.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no doubt that with the philosophical orientation of today's educational system in India every classroom will possibly have a student with special needs and every teacher will possibly have to meet the needs of these students. This will necessitate that teachers have right attitudes and appropriate knowledge and skills to meet the challenges that they will encounter in their classrooms. It is clearly evident from the conclusions of the study that senior secondary school teachers & head teachers possess a moderate attitude towards inclusive education. A positive teacher attitude towards inclusive education among teachers & head teachers is a prerequisite to implement successfully the government policies & schemes of inclusive education at the school level. A moderate teacher attitude towards inclusive education among secondary school teachers is responsible for the existing problems in inclusive education today. Type of teacher & gender were not found to have a significant effect of teacher attitude towards inclusive education. The study also revealed that training in inclusive education didn't influence the teacher attitude towards inclusive education significantly which is contrary to the findings of Schmidt and Vrhovnik (2015) that teachers without training for work with SN students had a lower level of agreement with respect to support and assistance at educational work with SN students in comparison with trained teachers. Inadequate training in special education, lack of resources, and high student-teacher ratio as barriers to successful implementation of inclusive education (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012).

Further the teachers with lower age levels were found to have a significantly higher attitude towards inclusion as compared to higher age levels which indicates the experimental

attitude of the youngsters. So developing a positive attitude towards inclusive education in teachers with lower level of age is much easier than those with higher age levels. Moreover the teachers with both levels also possess a moderate attitude towards inclusion. A lower level of attitude among the teachers & head teachers may be due to lack of sensitization component of the training or the inadequate training itself towards the issue.

It is a well known fact that the teachers who are highly sensitized & well trained are more likely to CWSN friendly and develop a positive attitude toward inclusion than those of teachers possessing low levels of sensitization. Therefore it is imperative to find the causes for prevailing moderate level of teacher attitude towards inclusive education among school teachers & head teachers which may be inadequate training in inclusive education, frequent transfers, over crowded classes, inadequate physical facilities, lack of audio-visual equipment and infrastructural facilities, lack of know-how to use modern classroom methods and instruction & need of training in inclusive education etc. There is a dire need to raise the level of teacher attitude toward inclusive education among teachers. The transforming teacher attitudes in a positive manner will increase the inclusiveness for a large number of students with disabilities (Beacham & Rouse, 2012; Das et al., 2013).

Intensive training in special education is required for all regular education teachers so as to be effective in an inclusive education setting (Shah et al., 2014). This necessitates the attempts to modify the present scenario of insensitivity & moderate attitude towards inclusive education of teachers. Initiatives must be taken to boost all these factors to develop a positive teacher attitude toward inclusive education. Various sensitization & orientation programmes for the teachers may also help in developing appropriate attitude level among teachers & head teachers. The Government and Policy Makers should take appropriate steps to modify the different policies and ideas of Inclusive education, for its successful implementation of school education system in the state.

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